

History of Wasatch

Wild game was plentiful. A herd of 17 antelope skirting the edge of the settlement, a large bear that wandered right into town and was shot, a herd of elk who came down from the hills and were trapped in the snow and all killed by settlement hunters—these among the recollections of those first years in the valley.

The second winter of the settlement, 1860-61, was about the same as the first one. The following summer, their third, plowing began in April, and the amount of grain planted was doubled over the previous season. Families kept coming in from other settlements and were forced to build on city lots, the old fort by now being completely filled with dwellings.

Military District Organized

In September, 1861, officers came to Heber and organized it into a military district. J. W. Witt was appointed major and John Hamilton adjutant over the division of militia, with Thomas Todd captain of infantry.

"William M. Wall was a great hand for conducting sham fights, we had many a one in the middle of the fort, cavalry against infantry. I remember one time we were having a sham fight, the infantry was charging the cavalry when the horses got frightened and ran across the ditch, Charles Thomas' horse threw him and put his shoulder out of joint and he is still lame in that arm. There was no more sham fighting that day."

During the winter of 1861-62 a home drama association was formed, with Elisha Everett Sr. manager and John Hamilton, secretary. They used quilts and blankets for wings and scenery. Later they began building a stone hall in which to stage plays, but it was never finished because of friction which developed when some claimed they were building a theater before they built a house of worship. The company continued, however, and gave plays year after year.

"By 1862 our population had increased to near 1,000 souls. Midway had three small settlements. Quite a few families had settled on Center creek, some at Charles-

ton, some in Round Valley and some up at Hailstone."

Indian War Reaches Wasatch

The Black Hawk Indian war spread to Wasatch valley in 1866. The three settlements in the west side of the valley merged into one and the name of the town, Midway, resulted. They settled at the middle community and built a fort.

Although no white person was killed or wounded by Indians in this valley during the Black Hawk much stock was driven off, killed and stolen. The threat was always present and only constant vigilance and armed strength prevented blood shed. More than 250

men were organized into active military duty, in two companies of cavalry and four of infantry. William Wall's cavalry had several brushes with the Indians, and in one skirmish they killed two redskins and wounded several more. Raids on cattle and other stock continued through the summer of 1866 and most of 1867. In August of the latter year, the final peace treaty was signed which ended the war in this valley. It is commemorated by the monument on the stakehouse grounds.

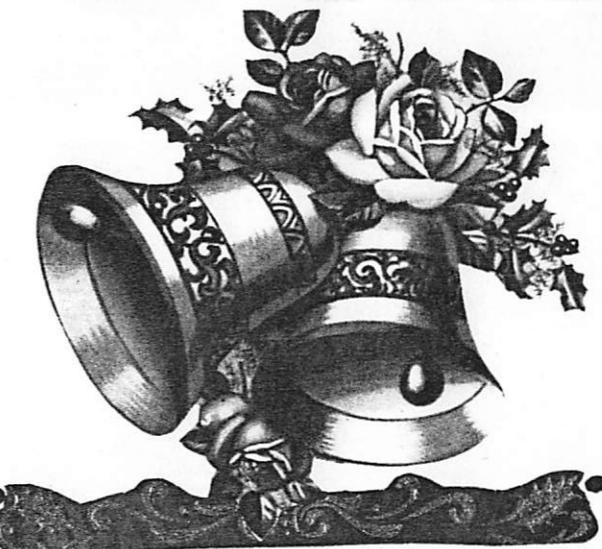
Wasatch county was officially created in 1862 by an act of the state legislature, bounded on the west by the summit of the Wasatch range, on the north by Summit county, on the east by the territorial line and on the south by Sanpete county. John W. Witt was the first probate judge.

The ending of Indian troubles in the valley removed the last serious obstacle to growth, and settlers flocked to the valley in the years that followed. In 1889, the Wasatch Wave was started under editorship of William Buys. Its first issue, on file in the Wave office, was dated March 23.

Heber City grew rapidly, having a population of around 2,000 in the first years of the twentieth century. A predominantly rural

population, with farming and livestock raising as the chief occupations, continued until the mines began to open and employ great numbers of men in the late 1920's. Since then, the mine payroll has been one of the largest and most important in the county. Wasatch county still remains a leading livestock center, however, with dairying making great strides in the last few years. Fine sheep are perhaps the county's best known product, an industry that has been built up from the first days of the valley's settlement.

Wasatch county stands today as one of the most prosperous regions in the state, with a diversified livelihood of mining, farming and stockraising.



Heber's First Christmas

One third of Heber's families could not get under the same roof for a banquet today, but they did in 1859 at the first Christmas ever observed here.

Six families out of a total of 17 attended a Christmas banquet prepared by Sarah, or "Mother" Lee, as she was known to everyone, according to John Crook's journal of early Heber history. Accommodations were small, and it was impossible to invite more. Those invited were Thomas Rusbands, James and Bessie Carlile, Charles N. Carroll, John Jordan and Mr. Crook, with their families. The house in which the ban-

quet was held was built on the city lot owned by Ann Howarth, a log cabin about 16 feet square with a bowery on the south front.

The event is related in Mr. Crook's journal as follows:

"It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining clear and cold, some snow on the ground. Tables were set under the bowery outside. The menu consisted of ground cherry pudding, squash was brought from the lower valley. These were sweetened with beet or carrot syrup. There was no sugar to be had. There were other vegetables and good bread. All supplies were brought from the lower valley, as Brother John Lee did not raise any crop the first year.

"Christmas week was a gay time. After the banquet, a party of young folks arrived, some three or four sleigh loads from Provo City. Most of the young people, especially the boys had been in the valley in the summer

and had harvested some grain on Center Creek. There were gay times when they arrived, with dancing and amusements. About New Years they returned home. Then we were left with no mail and no visitors and clear, cold weather prevailed. Snow was about 18 inches deep."

In the same year that the 13 colonies revolted against English rule and signed the Declaration of Independence, the first white men traveled through Wasatch valley. At least, this is the earliest recorded date of any visit by white men through this region.

Two Franciscan friars, Francisco Antanasio Domingues and Silvestre Velez de Escalante, the famed Father Escalante, who explored Utah, started from Santa Fe for the purpose of discovering a direct route to Monterey, California, site of one of their largest missions. They began their journey in July, 1776.

According to descriptions of their journal, they passed through what is now Colorado. They crossed followed Green river for some distance, crossed over to the Du-

chesne river and followed, probably, what was the west fork, White trappers undoubtedly traversed the valley in later years, but it was not until 1858, less than a dozen years after the first Mormons came west, that permanent homes and settlers came to Wasatch valley.

This first settlement in 1858 was sparse, limited to less than half a dozen homes in the lower end of the valley. From the journal of John Crook, self-appointed historian and one of the first men ever to settle here, we learn that William M. Wall, George W.

Bean, William Meeks, Aaron Daniels and others brought stock and grazed it in the summer of 1858, and also started the construction of ranch homes. Mr. Crook's journal says: "William M. Wall built a ranch at the south end of the valley, Father Decker bought the ranch later known as John Brown's home, Aaron Daniels built a ranch house about two miles north of Daniels, on what later became known as Meeks Bottoms. All of the above parties

I think kept some stock through the winter in the valley."

The journal says Father Decker "bought" a place, which would lead one to believe he did not settle that first year of 1858 because there would have been no places to buy from anyone. Several old settlers agree that Wall Meeks and Daniels were the first men to build homes here. Mr.

Crook's journal does not make this point entirely clear, and there is little else written on the subject that could be considered authoritative.

Surveys Made

While these ranchers were building homes in the summer and fall of 1858, two survey parties of Provo men, headed by J.

C. Snow, visited the valley twice, one in July and once in October, and surveyed two tracts in the north and central portions of the valley, dividing them into 20 acre tracts and claiming all the surveyed plots. They did not serve, however, returning to Utah before summer's end.

Next year, in the spring of 1859 a group of Provo men, one of whom was Mr. Crook, started for Wasatch valley, then known as Provo valley, to settle there. The party included, besides Mr. Crook, Charles N. Carroll, Thomas Kastner, James Carlile, Mr. Carpenter, whose first name was not designated, Jesse Bond, Henry Chawin and William Giles. On the last day of April they started for the valley, taking their wagons apart and carrying them piece by piece over a huge snowslide in Provo canyon. The next day they traveled to William Wall's ranch and reached it the first day of May, 1859.

Mr. Crook's journal of the trip continues:

"Early the next morning we crossed the river and after traveling for about two miles we arrived at Daniels' ranch, where we crossed the creek on ice. We journeyed on about a mile further to Meek's ranch, turned our teams out to feed and concluded to have breakfast. After breakfast was over, we started out on foot in a northerly direction to look out for a suitable place for the location of our camp. We found it very difficult to cross Center Creek and Lake Creek because of the drifts of snow which lay in the

willoows along the banks. In a few hours we arrived at the plat of ground designated for a city; near the place were John M. Murphy's dwelling house now

stands." When Mr. Crook makes reference to the present tense, it should be remembered his account was

compiled and written from his journal for the first issues of the Wasatch Wave, in 1889, and it is from there this is taken.

First Soil Turned

"In looking north we saw two dark objects moving along; and after gazing intently for some time we saw that they were moving back and forwards. The idea struck us that it was some

parties plowing; so off we started to fathom the problem; in drawing near to the objects we found our conjectures to be correct. The first man we reached

was William Davidson, with two yoke of cattle and plowing on

Robert Broadhead and James Davidson. They were plowing on the twenty acres of land now owned by John Turner in the north field. The other team of

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London creek and London spring. It runs today about two miles north of town. The area was also known as New London by many

settlers.

Daughter Named Timpanogos

The family of William Davidson was believed to be the first family to settle in the valley. His daughter which he named Timpanogos after the mountain, was the first white child born in the valley.

About May 20 of the same summer the settlers arrived, 1859, some of the 10 men returned to Provo for grain and supplies, and were accompanied on their return by quite a number of new settlers, among them Thomas H.

Giles, Hyrum Oaks, Martin Oaks, Sydney Epperson, and others.

About the Last of May another party arrived. More land was surveyed, and parties came and went all summer long acquiring ground.

Some stayed to settle, and the growth and development of Wasatch valley had begun. The first land, although Mr. Crook's party of 10 followed them by only

two weeks.

Mr. Crook's journal continues: "They were plowing inside of the one and one-half mile square

"Sometime about the middle of June Deputy Surveyor Jesse Fuller commenced to survey the plat of land that had been left for a town site, the starting point being George W. Clyde's corner.

Charles N. Carroll and John and John Crook were chain bearers. The survey was run on the first sawmill in the valley. Mr. had canvas suits, consisting of pants and jumper, made from an old wagon sheet. What boots and shoes we had, though boots were old, were well dressed when they

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the fort as his counselors.

July 24. William Meeks, who has served as presiding elder until now, resigned in the fall of 1860 and William Wall was chosen to replace him. He was herding cattle in Round valley, later known as

Wallsburg, and came to Heber to accept the position. He chose

James Laird and John M. Murdoch as his counselors.

"The north and west fields were now closed in, nearly to the river by a five-foot worm fence, the south line being about 80 rods south of the present county road to Midway. There were about 4,000 acres in the fields," Mr. Crook wrote.

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The ground that winter. During the winter months William Meeks and other men went up Center Creek canyon and brought out timber for sawmill. They began sawing in the fall of 1860, and in those days, and men, though

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